

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
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/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 2224  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1987

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT EG  
SUBJ: MININT AND THREE OTHERS FIRED FROM CABINET

REF: CAIRO 1899

1. TWO WEEKS AFTER ABRUPT ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRICE INCREASES  
ON BASIC COMMODITIES SENT THOUSANDS OF PROTESTING EGYPTIANS  
INTO THE STREETS, PRESIDENT SADAT HAS DECIDED TO FIRE HIS  
MININT; I.E., THE SECURITY SERVICES, NOT THE POLITICAL  
LEADERSHIP, ARE THE "OFFICIAL" SCAPEGOATS. CHANGES ALSO  
ANNOUNCED REMOVING THREE OTHER MINISTERS AND BRINGING THREE  
NEW INDIVIDUALS INTO CABINET.

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2. CHANGES ARE:

A. MININT: SAYYID FAHMY LEAVES CABINET. PRIME MINISTER  
SALIM ASSUMES INTERIOR PORTFOLIO. TWO DEPUTY MINISTERS ARE  
APPOINTED: MAJOR GENERAL OF POLICE MUHAMMAD NABAWI ISMA'IL,  
WHO HAS BEEN SERVING AS SALIM'S OFFICE DIRECTOR, AND MAJOR  
GENERAL OF POLICE KAMAL KHAYRALLAH, CURRENTLY GOVERNOR OF

SOHAG.

B. MININFO/CULTURE: DR. GAMAL OTEIFY LEAVES CABINET.

ABD AL-MUN'IM AL-SAWI, CURRENTLY SERVING AS DEPUTY PEOPLES ASSEMBLY SEPAKER, CHAIRMAN OF LARGE PUBLISHING HOUSE AND AS HEAD OF SUPREME PRESS COUNCIL, ASSUMES BOTH PORTFOLIOS.

C. MINCIVIL AVIATION/TOURISM: IBRAHIM NAGUIB LEAVES CABINET. MUHIBB RAMZI STINO ASSUMES BOTH PORTFOLIOS.

D. MINSOCIAL AFFAIRS/INSURANCE: AISHA RATIB LEAVES CABINET AND IS REPLACED BY DR. AMAL 'UTHMAN (OSMAN).

E. MINAGRICULTURE: ENGINEER IBRAHIM SHUKRI TAKES PORTFOLIO FROM ABD AL-AZIM ABU AL-'ATA. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WHICH, UNDER ABU AL-'ATA WAS COMBINED WITH IRRIGATION, ASSUMES INDIVIDUAL STATUS.

F. MINIRRIGATION: ABU AL-'ATA RETAINS THIS PORTFOLIO.

G. MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRIBUSINESS, MINERAL WEALTH AND SUDANESE AFFAIRS: DR. ABD AL-AZIZ HUSAYN, CURRENTLY MINISTER OF SUDANESE AFFAIRS TAKES ON NEW AGRIBUSINESS RESPONSIBILITIES. PRESENT MININDUSTRY AND MINERAL WEALTH SHAHIN IS PRESUMABLY NOW IN CHARGE OF MININDUSTRY ONLY.

3. COMMENT: SOME CHANGE IN CABINET HAD BEEN WIDELY EXPECTED, IN VIEW MISTAKES IN POLITICAL JUDGEMENT WHICH TRIGGERED RIOTS AND INEPT SECURITY DECISIONS WHICH MAY HAVE PROLONGED THEM. THAT SADAT DECIDED ON MININT AS SCAPEGOAT RATHER THAN THE ECONOMIC MINISTRIES IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. THIS DECISION WILL PROBABLY BE UNDERSTOOD BY EGYPTIANS AS PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION TO PROCEED WITH ECONOMIC REFORMS WHICH KAISOUNI HAS URGED, ALTHOUGH PROBABLY IN SOMEWHAT DILUTED AND FRADUALIST FORM. SADAT HAS BEEN STRESSING TO HIS INTERLOCUTERS  
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THESE PAST FEW DAYS THAT EGYPT HAS FOUR HARD YEARS AHEAD.

4. SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF RESHUFFLE IS THAT PRIMIN MAMDUH SALIM NOT ONLY STAYS BUT TAKES ON ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. HE IS BLAMED BY OUR INTERLOCUTORS FROM THE FAR LEFT TO THE MIDDLE CLASS RIGHT FOR HIS POLITICAL INEPTNESS AND HIS ERRORS IN SECURITY MATTERS (HIS SUPPOSED SPECIALTY). YET, IN ADDITION TO BE BEING PM AND HEAD OF GOVERNMENT PARTY, HE IS NOW ALSO MINISTER OF INTERIOR. FURTHER, TO REINFORCE HIS CONTROL OVER INTERIOR MINISTRY, SALIM HAS APPOINTED TWO OF HIS PROTEGES AS DEPUTIES. GENERAL NABAWI, IN CHARGE OF "SECURITY APPARATUS", HAS SERVED HIM PREVIOUSLY AS DIRECTOR OF THE PRIMIN'S OFFICE. NABAWI WILL BE SENIOR OF THE TWO NEW DEPMINISTERS.

5. OTHER CABINET CHANGES ARE MINOR COMPARED TO MININT AND PROBABLY DESIGNED AS CAMOUFLAGE FOR THAT CHANGE AND AS FACE SAVER FOR SECURITY SERVICES. LOSS OF DR. OTEIFY FROM MININFO WILL DISPIRIT PRESS ESTABLISHMENT. OTEIFY, WHILE

CERTAINLY NOT AN INDEPENDENT AGENT, MUST GET CREDIT FOR WIDELY APPLAUDED TV AND NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF CAIRO RIOTS AS WELL AS FOR SERIES OF TV SEMINARS ON WHAT WENT WRONG. HOWEVER, HIS OWN LAMENTABLE PERFORMANCE AS MODERATOR OF JAN 26 SEMINAR MAY HAVE SPEEDED HIS DEPARTURE. BY CONTRAST, ALA-SAWI HAS REPUTATION AS WILL PAWN OF WHATEVER POWERS REIGN. HE CAN BE RELIED UPON NOT TO PRESS THE ISSUE OF GREATER FREEDOM FOR THE MEDIA. AS NOTED REFTEL, HOWEVER, IT MAY BE THAT OTEIFY'S DEPARTURE DOES NOT SIGNAL LESS PRESS FREEDOM, BUT SIMPLY RESULTS FROM HIS HAILING HEALTH. NEVERTHELESS, A MORE REPUTABLE AND INDEPENDENTLY MINDED INDIVIDUAL THAN SAWI COULD HAVE BEEN FOUND.

6. DR. RATIB IS REPORTED BY PRESS TO HAVE IMPLIED AT RECENT CABINET MEETING THAT SOME HIGHLY PLACED EGYPTIANS ARE GUILTY OF CORRUPTION. SUCH PLAIN SPEAKING, IF IT OCCURRED, WOULD INSURE HER DISMISSAL. (IRONICALLY, STORY IS CIRCULATING CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT SHE WAS SACKED BECAUSE SHE IS SO CLOSE TO MRS. SADAT. THIS THEORY PRESUMES PRESIDENT IS ACTIVELY ENDEAVORING COMBAT CHARGES OF CRONYISM AND UXORIOUSNESS.) NEW MINAG HAS HIGH REPUTATION AS AGRONOMIST. DESIGNATION OF DR. HUSAYN FOR NEW AGRIBUSINESS JOB SUGGESTS OSMAN AHMAD OSMAN IS NO LONGER GOE AGRIBUSINESS COORDINATOR. DEPARTURE OF NAGUIB FROM HIS CIVILIAN AVIATION JOB CAN ONLY SIGNAL AN IMPROVEMENT IN THAT ABYSSMALLY DIRECTED MINISTRY. WE WILL PROVIDE BIOS ON NEW MINISTERS BY SEPTTEL. EILTS

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